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University of Illinois names 20th president
SUNY Research Foundation President Timothy L. Killeen selected;
Acclaimed researcher also served as top administrator at NSF

CHICAGO, Ill. — Timothy L. Killeen, vice chancellor for research and president of the Research Foundation of the State University of New York (SUNY), was named the 20th president of the University of Illinois on Wednesday, pending formal approval by the Board of Trustees at its Jan. 15 meeting in Chicago.

Killeen, 62, who would succeed retiring President Robert Easter, brings the experience of more than three decades as a teacher, researcher and administrator in public higher education and in top leadership positions with national scientific research agencies.

His work at SUNY mirrors core missions of the University of Illinois – supporting pioneering research and scholarship across disciplines, and taking it to the marketplace to drive economic growth.

As president of SUNY's Research Foundation, Killeen is chief executive officer of the largest, most comprehensive university-connected research foundation in the nation, administering about \$900 million annually across SUNY's statewide network of 29 state-supported research campuses. Combined with his role as vice chancellor for research, he is at the center of SUNY's strategy for research growth and works with campus leaders to increase basic, clinical and translational research.

He also chairs SUNY's Patent and Inventions Policy Board, which seeks to promote economic development by turning research discovery into new businesses, products and services.

Killeen spent more than 20 years on the faculty and in administration at the University of Michigan, and served as assistant director for geosciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF) before joining SUNY in 2012. The independent federal agency provides nearly a quarter of federal research funding for U.S. colleges and universities, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ranks third among U.S. universities in NSF funding.

A leading researcher in geophysics and space sciences, Killeen earned his Ph.D. in atomic and molecular physics from University College London at the age of 23. In 2007, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering, which honors the world's most accomplished engineers.

Killeen was selected as the next U. of I. president from a field of about 200 candidates and emerged as the top choice in the eight-month search because of a unique background that will help build on the University's long legacy of contributions to progress and economic growth, said Board of Trustees Chairman Christopher G. Kennedy.

"Academic research institutions are the greatest renewable economic resource this country has ever had, and we are thrilled to have one of the greatest living researchers in America to lead the University of Illinois," Kennedy said.

Killeen said the University of Illinois is a premier university with a nearly 150-year legacy of excellence in education, research and service to the state and nation.

"I am thrilled and deeply honored to have been selected by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees to serve as the next president of this incredible university," Killeen said. "The University of Illinois, with its three distinctive world-class campuses, stands poised to build on its tremendous and ongoing history of accomplishment to envision and define the future of public comprehensive higher education.

"Firing on all cylinders, and with distinguished leadership and fabulous faculty in place, the University of Illinois will continue to broaden opportunity; educate, enrich, and empower our students; discover, create, and disseminate the new knowledge needed for our common future; and drive economic development through innovation – all with a commitment to scholarship and excellence and in service to the public good," he said. "I will devote myself to this noble enterprise with every ounce of my energy. I thank the Board of Trustees for their confidence in me."

As president, Killeen will lead a university that is the state's largest educator with more than 78,000 students on its three campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield, along with satellite medical campuses in Peoria and Rockford. The Urbana-Champaign campus is part of the Big Ten Conference, the Chicago campus is home to the nation's largest medical school and a hospital and clinics that provide more than 450,000 patient visits annually, and the Springfield campus is regarded as a national leader in online education.

The University of Illinois is a top-ten research university with nearly \$1 billion in separately funded research, including \$549 million in federal funding that ranks 14th among universities nationwide. The university has a \$5.6 billion annual budget and more than 29,000 employees across its campuses.

Before joining SUNY, Killeen spent four years as assistant director for geosciences at NSF, managing a funding portfolio that grew from \$750 million to \$800 million during his time at the agency. He is founding co-chair of the Belmont Forum, which gathers representatives of leading government funding agencies worldwide to collaborate on global change research, and the Science and Technology Alliance for Global Sustainability.

He also has served as a Lyall Research Professor at the University of Colorado, and from 2000-2008 was director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, one of the world's premier atmospheric research centers.

During his more than two decades at the University of Michigan, he was a researcher and professor of atmospheric, oceanic and space sciences, and also served as associate vice president for research.

Killeen has authored more than 150 publications in peer-reviewed journals, along with 300 other publications and papers. He also has served on various White House committees and task forces, and has testified on multiple occasions to Congress and the Executive branch.

He is a native of Wales and is a U.S. citizen. He earned his bachelor's degree and Ph.D. at University College London. His wife, Roberta M. Johnson, has a Ph.D. in Geophysics and Space Physics from the University of California at Los Angeles and is executive director of the National Earth Science Teachers Association and clinical professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences at the State University of New York at Albany. They have three children.

Killeen would become the 20th president in the 147-year history of the University of Illinois, which was founded in 1867 as one of the nation's original land-grant universities.

He would succeed Easter, who has served as president since July 2012. Before becoming president, Easter spent his entire, more than 40-year career as a faculty member and senior administrator in Urbana-Champaign. He joined the faculty in 1976 after earning his doctoral degree in animal science from the Urbana-Champaign campus, and later served as dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, as interim provost, as interim vice chancellor for research and as interim chancellor from 2009 to 2011.

Easter plans to continue his work as a researcher on the Urbana-Champaign campus after he officially retires as president on June 30.

A complete biography and curriculum vitae for Killeen can be found at www.uillinois.edu/20thPresident.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery, the largest educational institution in the state with more than 78,000 students, more than 23,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards more than 20,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.